

Analyzing Visuals in Film and TV

camera shot: single, continuous view taken by a camera

close-up shot: detailed view of a person or an object; often reveals a character's feelings or focuses viewers' attention on an important item or action

establishing shot: extremely wide view; usually used to establish the location of a particular scene and acquaint viewers with the setting

long shot: wide view of a scene; shows the full figure of a person or group of people and their surroundings

medium shot: view that is wider than a close-up shot but less wide than an establishing or a long shot

point-of-view shot: shows what a character sees; the effect is to make viewers sympathize with the character and experience the scene as he or she would

camera angle: angle at which the camera is positioned during the recording of a shot

eye-level shot: recorded when the camera is positioned at eye-level with the characters, not at a low or high angle

high-angle shot: recorded when the camera is positioned to look down on an object, person, or setting; can make a person or thing look inferior or weak

low-angle shot: recorded when the camera is positioned to look up at an object or person; can make a character or an object look powerful or foreboding

lighting: use of shadows and light to direct viewers' attention or to create a mood

high-key lighting: style of lighting characterized by bright light and few shadows; may be used to create a sense of happiness or security

low-key lighting: style of lighting that features strong contrasts between light and dark as well as harsh shadows; may be used to convey suspense or intense drama

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When you are absorbed in a compelling story on screen, it can be difficult to notice all the techniques that are working together to draw you in. Use these strategies to guide your analysis of visual techniques in any film or TV scene.

HERE'S HOW

STRATEGIES FOR ANALYSIS

Strategy 1: Note the camera position. Films and TV shows are made up of many shots that are pieced together to tell a story. Different types of camera shots and camera angles can affect where your eye is drawn to and what you learn about the characters and the setting.

- Think about what the **establishing shots** reveal about the setting.
- Take note of **close-up shots**. What do they reveal about a character's emotional state or about his or her reactions to other characters and events?
- Look for **point-of-view shots** and consider how they help you relate to or identify with certain characters.
- Notice whether characters are shot at **eye level** or from a **particular angle**. Think about why a director would use this angle and what its effect is.

Strategy 2: Observe the lighting. Lighting is one of the most important techniques used in film and TV, largely because it can convey a particular mood and affect viewers' emotions.

- Notice whether a scene is shot using **high-key** or **low-key lighting**. Is the scene brightly lit or filled with shadows and contrasts between light and dark?
- Pay attention to how the light draws your eye to a certain object or person.
- Think about the mood that the lighting helps create. Is the mood cheery? ominous? nostalgic? Consider how the filmmaker might be trying to make you feel.

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Directions: Examine this shot from the action movie *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and then answer following questions.



Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl

1. This image is an example of a long shot. What can you tell about the setting in which this scene takes place? Cite specific details to support your answer. _____

2. What type of camera angle is used? Notice both who and what are being shown in the shot and explain why the filmmaker may have chosen this angle.

3. Describe the lighting in this shot. What mood does the lighting create?

4. How would this image be different if it were a medium eye-level shot?

LESSON

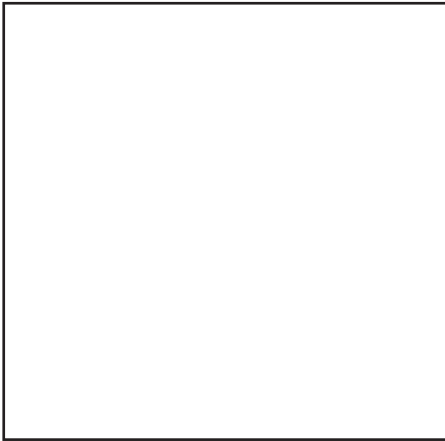
4

PRACTICE WORKSHEET B

COPYMASTER

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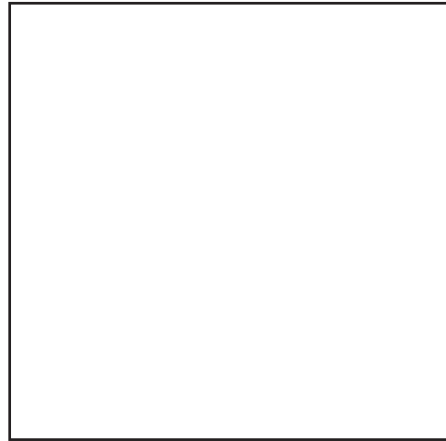
Directions: Analyze a short scene from a film or TV show of your choice, paying particular attention to the use of camera shots, camera angles, and lighting. You may need to view the scene more than once. Using the storyboard shown below, sketch four different types of shots represented in the scene. On the lines below each box, describe the shot, noting details about the type of shot, the angle, and the lighting. Then explain what effects these techniques have on the story and the characters.



Type of Shot: _____

Lighting: _____

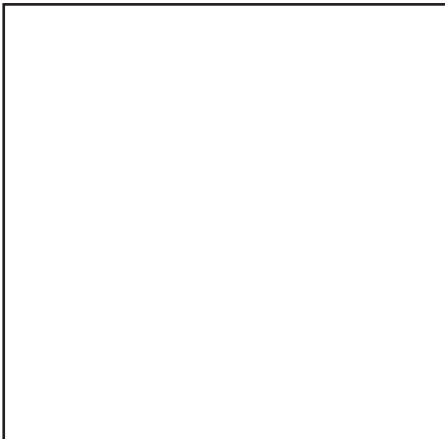
Effect: _____



Type of Shot: _____

Lighting: _____

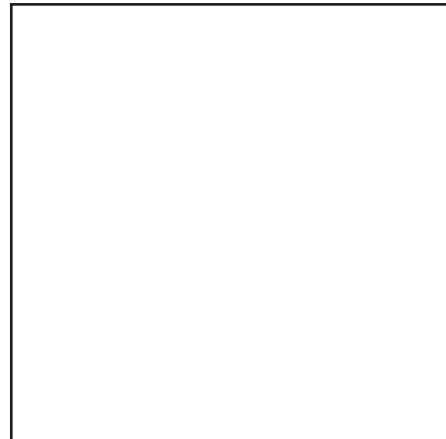
Effect: _____



Type of Shot: _____

Lighting: _____

Effect: _____



Type of Shot: _____

Lighting: _____

Effect: _____
